

the link

JANUARY
2014



VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System

EMPLOYEE WELLNESS
6 OFFERS WORK
STATION OPTIONS

eye on nwi

Marci Mylan, Ph.D., MHA | Director



January is often a time where organizations reflect upon the past year and significant achievements. Within the VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System, we have much to be proud of in 2013. During a recent strategic planning retreat, our service chiefs shared accomplishments their employees and departments achieved. Here is a glimpse of a few goals that we achieved in 2013.

We improved access to audiology services through the use of tele-audiology for devices and services that include ear impressions, hearing aid fittings and adjustments. This decreased waiting and travel times for many of our Veterans.

Our Mental Health Specialty Programs collaborated with community partners through the use of VA programs to decrease our number of homeless Veterans in Nebraska from January 2012 to January 2013 by 36 percent.

Extended Care and Rehabilitation and NWIHCS were selected as a VA pilot site for traumatic brain injury telehealth; our first patient treated using this initiative was in April.

The Surgery department implemented a pilot program to provide preoperative surgical evaluations at the patient's home community-based outpatient clinic. With more than 1,080 preoperative evaluations completed, NWIHCS increased surgical telemedicine opportunities while reducing pre-op travel required by Veterans.

These are just a few snapshots of our successes. We have employees performing mightily every day. It is important that we recognize the efforts of all of you that often go unheralded.

Thank you for your hard work in 2013. I have great anticipation of even more innovation and success in 2014. Happy New Year to you all!

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FACT: GET THAT 6-PACK OF AB MUSCLES! WHILE USING A FIT BALL AS A CHAIR, YOUR BODY IS USING YOUR CORE (ABDOMINAL) MUSCLES TO COMPENSATE FOR CHANGES IN BALANCE. SO, YOU ARE GETTING A LOW-KEY ABDOMINAL WORKOUT.

Cover: Bianca Mehan, RN, a case manager in the VA NWIHCS, Omaha medical center Red Clinic, uses a sit-to-stand desk. Photo by Will Ackerman



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CONTENTS

“To serve Veterans at the VA means that I have the most rewarding and best job in the world!”

Janelle Sellers, PharmD
Clinical Pharmacy Specialist | North Platte CBOC



Meet an Employee | VA Views | Calendar



Employee Wellness Offers Alternatives to Sitting While You Work



Affordable Dental Coverage Available



Mobile Apps Provide Personal Tools to Augment Traditional Therapy



This magazine is an authorized publication for VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System (VA NWIHCS). Contents of The Link are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. government, or the Department of Veterans Affairs. The editorial content of this publication is the responsibility of the VA NWIHCS Public Affairs Office.

CONTACT US

Have a story idea? Call the VA NWIHCS Public Affairs Office; Will Ackerman at 402-995-4719, Anna Morelock at 402-995-5547, or email vhanwipublicaffairs@va.gov.

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meet darrel willoughby

Library Manager, VA NWIHCS (Omaha)
U.S. Navy Veteran



Q: How long have you been at the VA?

A: I've been at VA NWIHCS for eight years, minus a recent nine-month employment stint at the Topeka, Kans., VA.

Q: What does your job entail?

A: Make sure that staff is connected with information resources necessary for patient care at NWIHCS.

Q: What do you like most about your job?

A: Being able to find solutions for staff information needs.

Q: Where can you be found when you are not at work?

A: My principle social activities are church, working with the (U.S. Navy) Fleet Reserve Association, and in south Omaha with the Kroc Center. 📞

events

WHAT'S GOING ON?

- Jan. 1-31 National Volunteer Blood Donor Month
- Jan. 1 New Year's Day
- Jan. 3 Blood Drive, Lincoln CBOC
- Jan. 6 VA Food Pantry, Lincoln CBOC
- Jan. 5-10 National Folic Acid Awareness Month
- Jan. 7 Lunch 'N Learn: The Good, the bad, and the ugly of diets
- Jan. 9 Lunch 'N Learn: Over the counter options for treating the cold and flu symptoms
Blood Drive, Grand Island CBOC
- Jan. 10 National Cut Your Energy Costs Day
- Jan. 14 Lunch 'N Learn: Getting started: Building a healthy diet plate
- Jan. 15 VA Food Pantry, Community Resource & Referral Center, Omaha
- Jan. 17 VA CoffeeHaus, Lincoln CBOC
- Jan. 22 VA Community Book Club, Lincoln CBOC
- Jan. 19-25 Healthy Weight Week
- Jan. 19-26 National Certified Nurse Anesthetists Week
- Jan. 20 Martin Luther King Jr. Day (federal holiday)
- Jan. 23 Women's Health Weight Day
- Jan. 25 National IV Nurse Day
- Jan. 31 Chinese New Year
- Jan. 27-Feb. 2 National Drug Facts Week

For more information
about VA NWIHCS events,
visit www.nebraska.va.gov.



WHAT IS YOUR New Year's Resolution?



"To make my team even better in 2014."

Elizabeth Clayton, RN
Ambulatory Care
Lincoln CBOC



"To get Healthy! This is the same every year."

Nicole Holland, CNA
Nursing Assistant
Grand Island CBOC

"To strengthen my faith and growing relationship with God."

Keith Janousek, U.S. Navy Veteran
Program Support Assistant, Nutrition | Omaha VAMC



"My New Year's resolution is to continue to have a happy and healthy family, to spoil all grandbabies and for a big Nebraska win."

LuAnne Schrader-Songster, LPN
Telehealth/Ambulatory Care | North Platte CBOC

"I don't even make them anymore because I don't have the willpower to keep it; so my resolution is not to make one."

Jennifer Trompke | Telehealth Nurse | Holdrege CBOC



"My New Year's Resolution is to be the person my dogs think I am. It's going to be difficult, because they think I'm pretty awesome, but I'm going to try."

Jennifer Holland
U.S. Army Veteran
Medical Support Assistant
Grand Island CBOC



Employee Wellness offers alternatives to sitting while you work

Will Ackerman | Public Affairs

Many employees have jobs that entail spending hours sitting at a desk in front of a computer, which can be unhealthy because of inactivity.

Employee Wellness offers two options through a pilot program to reduce the impact from jobs that are sedentary: fit balls and sit-to-stand desks. Fit balls are rubber and come in a variety of sizes and colors. The employee sits on the ball in lieu of a chair while working at a desk.

If someone has a chronic back ailment, the balls are not good to use, because they might aggravate the problem said Quin Kelly, VA NWIHCS Employee Wellness Coach.

Pam Florea, RN, a nurse case manager in the VA NWIHCS, Omaha medical center Red Clinic, spends a lot of time on the phone talking to patients. She and other coworkers have used the fit balls for about two months.

“The (fit balls) are good for the back, because they force you to sit an upright position. The individual has to have good posture while sitting on the balls to keep balanced and not fall off.”

Quin Kelly, RN | VA NWIHCS Employee Wellness Coach

“You have to sit straight, because I do notice if I’m not because it can cause pain,” Florea said.

The sit-to-stand desks have a monitor and computer. The desk’s height can be adjusted based upon the individual. Employees still have their regular work stations, but can alternate between that and the standing work desk. Lori Dierking spends about eight to nine hours in front of a computer as a clinical applications coordinator at the VA NWIHCS, Lincoln Community-Based Outpatient Clinic.

“I sit most of the day in my job, and I forget to get up and move until my legs start aching,” Dierking said. “The standing desk gave me



Pam Florea (left), RN, VA NWIHCS, Omaha medical center Red Clinic case manager works while sitting on a fit ball. Lori Dierking (right), clinical applications coordinator, VA NWIHCS, Lincoln Community-Based Outpatient Clinic, works at a sit-to-stand desk. Photos by Will Ackerman and Bruce Thiel.

► the opportunity to at least get out of my chair and stretch and keep working.”

Kelly said employees must complete a personal health certification before they

can use the ball and work station. Health conditions including back pain, dizziness or problems with balance require employees to have medical approval from their provider. ❶

Employees complete a survey before and after using the station and ball as part of the pilot. This is to determine how effective employees felt the two tools were, and whether employee wellness will purchase more for use.

For more information, or to put your name on the waiting list, email quin.kelly@va.gov.



Affordable DENTAL COVERAGE AVAILABLE



Will Ackerman | Public Affairs

Eligible Veterans, plus family members receiving care under the Civilian Health and Medical Program (CHAMPVA), can now purchase affordable dental insurance through a partnership between VA, Delta Dental and MetLife.

Veterans enrolled in VA health care can purchase one of the dental plans. This three-year pilot is for Veterans with no dental coverage, or those eligible for VA dental care who want to purchase additional coverage. Participation doesn't affect entitlement to VA dental services and treatment.

There are no eligibility limitations based on service-connected disability rating or enrollment priority assignment.

People interested in participating can complete an application online at www.deltadentalvadip.org, or www.metlife.com/vadip. Coverage begins Jan. 1, 2014, and is available throughout the United States and its territories.

Spouses and dependent children who are reimbursed for most medical expenses under VA's CHAMPVA program are eligible. CHAMPVA participants are spouses, survivors or dependent ▶

▶ children of Veterans officially rated as "permanently and totally" disabled by a service-connected condition.

Dental services vary by plan and include diagnostic, preventive, surgical, emergency and endodontic/restorative treatment.

Enrollment in the VA Dental Insurance Plan (VADIP) is voluntary. Participants are responsible for all premiums. Copayments and other charges may apply.

Veterans who receive free dental services for problems connected to a medical condition that's officially certified as service connected will continue to receive these services free if they enroll. ⓘ

For more information, visit www.va.gov/healthbenefits/vadip, or contact Delta Dental at 855-370-3303 or MetLife at 888-310-1681.

employees | NEW | LEAVING

HELLO

Nov. 3 to Nov. 30

Charinne Abellira, Primary Care and Specialty Medicine

Daniel Alexander, Nursing

Todd Allen, Surgery

Rebecca Andresen, Primary Care and Specialty Medicine

Jessica Benak, Veterans Canteen Service

Joshua Bint, Extended Care and Rehabilitation

Carla Bird, Primary Care and Specialty Medicine

Glenda Bolden, Veterans Canteen Service

Brett Boyum, Human Resources

Perris Brooks, Nursing

Daniel Coats, Social Work

Brittany Crittenden, Pharmacy

Angela Dunn, Primary Care and Specialty Medicine

Samuel Edwards, Mental Health

Joanna Faryna, Mental Health

Patrice Fiedler, Primary Care and Specialty Medicine

Sarah Fox, Mental Health,

Bette Gibilisco, Pathology

Mitchell Hansen, Veterans Canteen Service

Thomas Hejkal, Surgery

Christine Herout, Social Work

Tanya James, Primary Care and Specialty Medicine

Sherrie Johnston, Human Resources

Pauline Kunichika, Social Work

Meghan Lefrancois, Veterans Canteen Service

Carrie Lemar, Social Work

James Mescher, Surgery

Lashawn Mccarty, Surgery

Joseph Burt-Miller, Research

Benjamin Oppong, Mental Health

Cassandra Pennewell, Veterans Canteen Service

Jim Post, Nursing

Suzanne Rainforth, Primary Care and Specialty Medicine

Melody Rohwedder, Social Work

Dorothy Ruiz, Veterans Canteen Service

Tracy Sherwood, Social Work

Fay Stephens, Primary Care and Specialty Medicine

Thyris Taylor, Mental Health

Tiffany Tesoro, Quality Management

Marianne Tomasello, Surgery

Kevin Tully, Primary Care and Specialty Medicine

Jacob Ulfers, Extended Care & Rehabilitation

Elizabeth Wayt, Business Office

Sarah Weatherly, Social Work

Loren Welch, Engineering

Larry West, Surgery

Deon Wilson, Primary Care and Specialty Medicine

Sheryl Young, Business Office

GOODBYE

May Asouha, Primary Care and Specialty Medicine

Laura Deaver, Primary Care and Specialty Medicine

Karen Hohler, Prosthetics

Blonzine Hunter, Veterans Canteen Service

Pauline Kunichika, Social Work

RETIRING

Susan Clemons, Mental Health

Anita Cook, Pathology

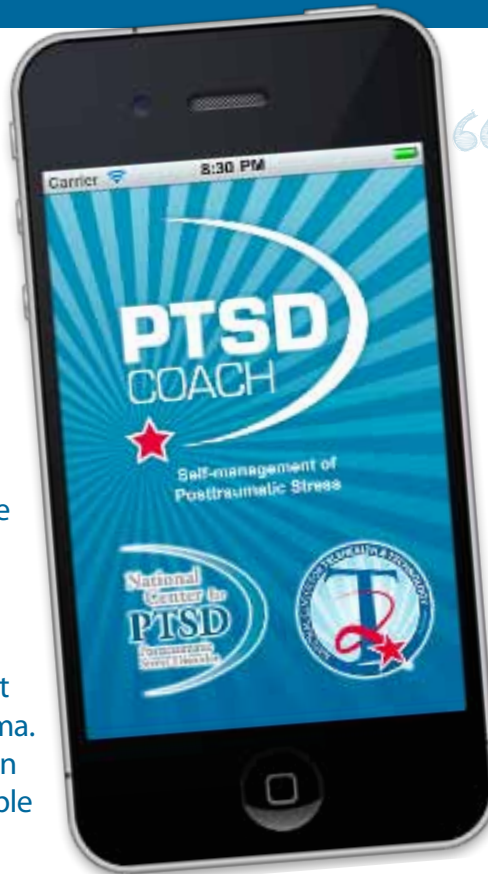
Mobile Apps Provide Personal Tools to Augment Traditional Therapy

Will Ackerman | Public Affairs

Need help with managing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)? There's an app for that.

Although apps are not intended to replace traditional therapy when an illness requires a professional medical provider, there are many mobile applications the VA has endorsed or created.

The PTSD Coach app can help Veterans learn about and manage symptoms that commonly occur after trauma. The app features information about the illness and available treatments and skills the Veteran can use to manage symptoms and online support. ▶



“Mobile apps can be incredibly helpful in assisting Veterans to practice the skills they learn in therapy, reminding them to practice these skills in their real-world environments and how to use proper technique when practicing.”

Todd Fleischer, PhD,
VA NWIHCs Chief of Psychology
Acting Mental Health Supervisor, Lincoln CBOC

▶ PTSD Coach was created by the VA's National Center for PTSD in partnership with the Department of Defense's National Center for Telehealth & Technology (DoD T2).

Fleischer said although these are great reminders, mobile tools “don't have the flexibility, adaptability and problem-solving elements one needs to develop a treatment plan and adapt to challenges when making progress in treatment.”

“Developing and implementing an active treatment plan is a dynamic process between the Veteran and their provider,” Fleischer said. 🗣️

(Information provided courtesy of the DoD National Center for Telehealth & Technology.)



VA-ENDORSED APPS DEVELOPED BY THE DOD T2:

LIFEARMOR: Provides information on myriad topics that range from sleep, depression, PTSD, to relationship problems. You can complete a self-assessment and even track your symptoms.

BREATHE2RELAX: The tool provides a hands-on diaphragmatic breathing exercise that has been documented to decrease the body's “fight-or-flight” stress responses, and to help with mood stabilization, anger control and anxiety management.

T2 MOOD TRACKER: Allows the user to self-monitor, track and reference their emotional experience over a period of days, weeks and months using a visual analogue rating scale.

POSITIVE ACTIVITY JACKPOT: Uses augmented reality technology to combine a phone's global positioning system and camera to find nearby enjoyable activities or pleasant diversions.

For more information about these, visit www.ptsd.va.gov/apps/ptsdcoachonline or www.t2.health.mil/products/mobile-apps.



VA and the health care law

What Veterans need to know.

Starting in 2014, most Americans must have health care coverage that meets a minimum standard.

If you are enrolled in VA health care, there is nothing else you need to do. The new health care law will not change your VA health care or your out-of-pocket costs.

Veterans Not Enrolled – Apply Now

- Apply online at www.va.gov/healthbenefits/enroll
- Call 1-877-222-VETS (8387)
- Visit your local VA health care facility



To learn more about VA health care and ACA, go to www.va.gov/aca or call 1-877-222-VETS (8387)



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